

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear violation of the press's sacred duty to act as an independent force for checks and balances in the government.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. Mandating the broadcast of a fiercely partisan program, while prohibiting the broadcast of programming that would represent the other side of an issue, is a violation of the trust endowed to the press by the public.

Sinclair's actions demonstrate a gross violation of the essential role the press must play to maintain a healthy democracy. If it succeeds in its ends, it will be a terrible blow to the perception of impartiality. It will also demonstrate the tremendous threat media consolidation poses for this society. License renewal processes would have to be protested if stations are put in the position of following direct orders from a corporation dedicated to the bottom line rather than fair and accurate news coverage.